

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS MATTERS DAY

MEDIA RELEASE

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8 in 10 people believe no child or young person should be homeless in Australia

A new national poll by Essential Media finds that across Australia and all age groups, 80 percent of people agree that child and youth homelessness is unacceptable and that all levels of government must do more to tackle the issue.

Today on **Youth Homelessness Matters Day** community organisations are joining with young people to urge Federal and State governments to commit to ending child and youth homelessness – to develop a national stand-alone Child & Youth Homelessness Strategy with adequate funding.

“Too many children and young people in Australia live in unsafe home environments, couch-surf or sleep rough. Frontline services know what needs to be done, they just need more funding to provide the children and young people who come to them with crucial support,” said Trish Connolly, national coordinator of Youth Homelessness Matters Day and Yfoundations CEO.

Key facts:

- 40 percent of people experiencing homelessness are under 24.
- Last year 38,300 children and young people (15–24 years old) presented alone needing support from a Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS).
 - 17,248 of them needed a crisis bed – but only 1 in 2 got it. This resulted in 8,450 children and young people being turned away.
- Currently HALF of the children and young people in desperate need of a crisis bed for the night don't not get it.
- Frontline services tell us that nearly 90% of the children and young people who come to them are escaping violence.

“We are particularly concerned that when children and young people turn up to a specialist youth homelessness service, only **half** can get the crisis bed and support they need, the rest are turned away,” said Ms Connolly.

“Frontline Youth Homelessness service providers tell us that they don’t have enough funding to provide crisis beds to all the children and young people who need them. They do everything they can to avoid turning children away, but they only have enough funding to support HALF the children and young people who come to them needing a safe bed.

“Children and young people who are turned away resort to couch-surfing, returning to violent homes or sleeping in unsafe and insecure conditions.

“Many of these children and young people have experienced violence in the home, mental health concerns or multiple disadvantages. It is heartbreaking to turn them away from the lifesaving support they need because services are underfunded.

The Essential poll found that 80% of respondents believe there should be the necessary accommodation available for any child or young person in need – with strong bipartisan consensus: 78% of Labor voters, 79% of Coalition voters and 81% of Greens voters agreed any child or young persons should have the accommodation support they need.

“We call on the Federal Government and all State and Territory Governments to significantly increase funding for frontline services to ensure all children and youth facing homelessness can access crisis accommodation, wrap around support and medium to long-term housing.

“Governments must also recognise and address the factors causing and contributing to child and youth homelessness, including poverty, domestic and family violence, insufficient social and affordable housing and the rental crisis”, concluded Ms Connolly.

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